

ACTIVIST NEWS

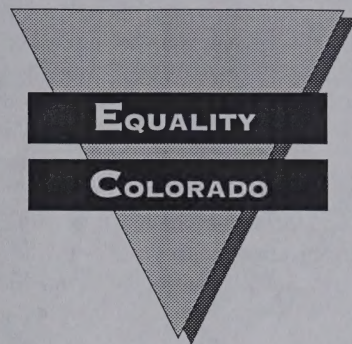
A PUBLICATION OF EQUALITY COLORADO

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APRIL 1997

SB 209: SENATOR ATTACKS HIGHER ED

Apparently feeling that access to health care is not for everyone, Sen. Ben Alexander (R-Montrose) has introduced a bill that would prohibit state institutions of higher education from extending insurance benefits to domestic partners of faculty and staff. The University of Colorado Regents have been considering such benefits, and other schools have begun to think about them as well. The legislation wouldn't affect private colleges, such as the University of Denver (which does extend domestic partner benefits), or to students (CU students have access to DP benefits).

Along with Rep. Musgrave's anti-marriage bill, SB 209 shows that members of the 1997 legislature are willing to go out of their way to attack the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. This bill got special late bill status, which required permission from the Senate leadership to introduce. Of course, this also represents an attack by Alexander on the freedom of higher education institutions to improve the workplace situation for their employees.

ACTION!

► SB 209 will be heard on April 10 in the Senate Education Committee. Members include Republicans Alexander, Arnold, Duke, & Chlouber, and Dems Matsunaka, Pascoe, and Thiebaut. Call Senate GOP at (303) 866-4866, fax (303) 866-2012; and Dems at (303) 866-4865, fax (303) 866-4543.

Springs Affiliate Cans HRC's *Ellen* Ad

KRDO-Channel 13, Colorado Springs' ABC affiliate, has refused to air an ad sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign during the April 30 coming-out episode of "Ellen." They have refused to comment, and won't return Ground Zero's phone calls to say why. The ad talks about the fact that in 41 of 50 states, there is no protection from sexual orientation discrimination in employment. ABC refused to air the ad under its "controversial issues" policy, so HRC has been forced to try local affiliates. Denver's Channel 7 plans to air the ad.

ACTION!

► KRDO's phone number is 719-632-1515 and their fax is 475-0815. Please ask them to consider airing the ad because it speaks to a crucial issue -- all forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Anti-marriage fight rages on

HB 1198 passed the Colorado State Senate last month after Gov. Roy Romer wrote a letter to legislators saying he'd sign a bill with different language. Romer said he didn't like how Musgrave's bill put same-sex relationships in the same category as incest and bigamy, but he still didn't want to recognize out-of-state same-sex marriages. Senators Perlmutter and Matsunaka, both Democrats, then introduced an amendment to the bill that replaced Musgrave's language with Romer's. The fact that the two houses passed different versions of the same bill means that HB 1198 now goes to "conference committee" to work out a compromise version which would need to be passed again by both houses.

Meanwhile, Gov. Roy Romer has agreed to name a commission to study the needs of long-term same-sex relationships. He is in the process of determining the scope and makeup of the commission.

ACTION!

► No matter the language, 1198 represents an attack on same-sex couples. Contact Governor Romer at (303) 866-2471, email Romer@governor.state.co.us, or write to 136 State Capitol, Denver, CO 80203.

Tell him *your thoughts* on HB 1198, and that you appreciate his efforts around partnership issues.

Also, contact your legislators again and let them know how you feel about HB 1198.

CU Hit by Hate

Over the last few weeks, the CU-Boulder LBGTA has seen a number of incidents of bias-motivated harassment and graffiti. Some of the reported episodes include: destruction of the LBGTA bulletin boards and door; "Kill Fags" written in black marker on the walls opposite the office; "Stop the plague. Destroy the homo alliance [inverted triangle with an X through it]" in a men's bathroom; and threatening calls left to the LBGTA voicemail. The organization is working with the campus housing office and Equality Colorado's Anti-Violence Project to address safety concerns and responses to the incidents.

ACTION! It's important to document and report all instances of hate crimes and anti-gay harassment. Please contact Equality Colorado's Anti-Violence Project at (303) 839-5540 or, if the situation is a crisis, call our 24-hour hotline at (303) 852-5094.

News and updates

Vaid returns to Task Force: The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has a new director of their Policy Institute. John D'Emilio has left his position thanks to a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. He'll remain with the Institute as a Senior Fellow. His replacement is former Task Force Executive Director Urvashi Vaid, author of "Virtual Reality."

Congressional Report on marriage: A new congressional report reveals that there are at least 1,049 laws addressing marital status, including federal benefits, protections, and responsibilities all forbidden to lesbian and gay couples under the so-called Defense of Marriage Act that became law last year. Categories of the 1,049 federal laws that refer to marital status include: Social Security and related programs, food stamps, Veterans' Benefits, Taxation, Employment benefits, and Immigration. Copies of the GAO report are available at <http://www.gao.gov/> or from the Office of General Counsel, U.S. General Accounting Office, Washington, DC 20548.

Penn State -- so STRAIGHT: An anti-gay student group won recognition at Penn State University, after an appeals board decided it would not break the institution's discrimination codes. STRAIGHT, which stands for Students Reinforcing Adherence in General Heterosexual Tradition, was initially denied recognition by a student court, but the board's reversal of a student court ruling said STRAIGHT didn't discriminate in selecting members and gave no sign it would discriminate based on sexual orientation. Recognition means that STRAIGHT can use Penn State letterhead and meet in university buildings, and it will have to admit lesbians and gay men.

CALENDAR

April 1997

SECOND MONDAYS • April 14, 7:00 p.m., Family of Christ Presbyterian Church, 2410 35th Ave., Greeley. Weld County activists will meet to talk about organizing in the Greeley area. Call GGLBA at (970)351-1484.

COL. MARGARETHE CAMMERMEYER • April 17, 7:00 pm, Lory Student Center, CSU. Author of *Serving in Silence*. Call (970) 491-5402 to reserve your tickets.

LAMBDA RISING QUEER STUDIES CONFERENCE • April 19, CU Boulder. Call (303) 492-1377 for details.

SAN LUIS VALLEY ORGANIZING CONFERENCE • April 26, Alamosa. Call Equality at (303) 839-5540 for more info.

BIBLICAL SELF-DEFENSE and Liberation Workshop • April 26, 9:00 am - 1 pm Exploring the 6 scriptural references to same-sex behavior, discussing ways to respond to those who believe the Bible holds an anti-GLB perspective, and looking at positives in the Bible. Call Laurene at (303) 839-5540 to sign up.

CONGRESSWOMAN SABRINA SOJOURNER/AIDS WALK • April 26, Gunnison. Walk at 3:00 p.m., Ms. Sojourner's presentation at 8:00 p.m. Sponsored by Western State College's LGBTA. For more info, contact Dr. Cheryl Jackson Hall at (970) 943-2098.

Aloha finally here! The *Aloha, Colorado!* action kit is finished and shipped. If you would like a copy of this manual for organizing around the issue of same-sex marriage rights, please contact Equality Colorado. The kit gives specific ideas for activism in the media, with communities of faith, and even a House Party kit. Now is the time to redouble our efforts to educate the state.

Kentucky Fried Legislation: A legislator in Kentucky has introduced a bill for the 1998 session which would amend the state's domestic violence statute to prevent judges from giving protective orders to victims of same-sex domestic violence. Sen Tim Philpot suggested that "If violence among homosexuals is so profound that they need special protection, the gay community needs to come forth and explain what the problem is."

Scholarship Fund Established

EAGLE, the Gay and Lesbian Employee Association of US West, has established the "Regional EAGLE Scholarship Fund" to provide scholarships to undergraduate students who are residents of and/or are undergraduate students attending an accredited institution in several Western states, including Colorado. Preference to GLBT people, and those working for the GLBT community.

ACTION! For applications, call 206-689-6988, write The EAGLE Regional Scholarship Fund, PO Box 4321, Seattle, WA 98104; or email watersedge@aol.com.